

Washington County Service Authority Water Project Groundbreaking

July 9, 2010

Abingdon, Virginia

I am pleased to join you this morning in Abingdon as construction begins on two federally funded improvements to Washington County's public water infrastructure that are expected to meet the County's water needs for the next 40 years.

Today construction begins on a federally funded expansion of Washington County's water treatment plant, located on the Middle Fork of the Holston River, which will triple its size. Construction also begins on a new water storage facility, which will serve as the receiving tank for the expanded water treatment plant and as the primary water storage facility for the 20,000 residents and businesses that rely on Washington County's public water service.

Adequate and reliable public water systems are essential to maintaining the high quality of life in Southwest Virginia as well as to achieving our economic development goals for the region. For these reasons, working with our area's leaders to expand our water and wastewater infrastructure is one of my highest priorities.

I have been actively working with the Washington County Service Authority to secure the federal funds necessary to improve the County's public water infrastructure and provide services to more homes and businesses. Washington County has been experiencing residential and economic growth in recent years, and as a result, the demand for public water services in the County is outpacing the water treatment plant's capacity. In addition, the County's primary water storage facility is in need of repair and is inadequate in size to meet the County's water storage needs.

To address this problem, at my urging, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its

Rural Development Agency, has provided a low-interest federal loan of \$26 million to the Washington County Service Authority to nearly triple the size of the water treatment plant. This amount represents the entire project cost.

In addition, the Rural Development Agency has provided a low-interest federal loan of \$5 million to the Service Authority for the construction of a new water storage facility, which when completed will serve as the receiving tank for the water treatment plant. The \$5 million in federal funding will cover the entire cost of construction of the water storage tank.

With the benefit of the federal funds, Washington County's water treatment plant on the Middle Fork of the Holston River will undergo two phases of improvements that will nearly triple its size. The first phase will increase the plant's treatment capacity from 4.6 million gallons per day to 6.6 million gallons per day. The first phase will also include the construction of a new pumping station and a new filter. It is expected that construction will be completed on this phase in one year.

After completion of the first phase of construction, the second phase will commence, which will expand the plant's capacity to 12 million gallons per day. Additionally, as part of the second phase, a new raw water intake will be installed on the South Fork of the Holston. Four new filters will be added, and a building for laboratory, chemical work and office space will be constructed. Construction on the second phase of the expansion is expected to be completed in two years.

With the \$5 million in additional federal funds, a new 4 million gallon water storage tank will be constructed to serve as the water treatment plant's receiving tank and the County's primary water storage facility. As part of the project, 4,000 feet of 24 inch water lines will also be installed. Construction on the new storage facility is scheduled to be completed in 9 months.

The expanded water treatment plant along with the new water storage facility are expected to serve the County's water needs for the next 40 years, providing new public water services to as many as 1,300 homes in the areas of Washington County surrounding the Towns of Abingdon, Damascus, Glade Spring as well as the communities of Meadowview and Emory. In addition, the new public water infrastructure will make future commercial and industrial growth possible in the County.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a number of individuals whose efforts have been vital to advancing Washington County's public water infrastructure improvements on which construction begins today.

I would like to thank Travis Jackson, Area Director for the Rural Development Agency, and his excellent staff for their outstanding work to help Washington County secure the USDA funds for this project.

I also want to thank the Chair of the Washington County Service Authority, Gerald Cole, the Authority's Vice Chair, Joe Chase, and the other members of its Board of Commissioners for their leadership and foresight in meeting the County's water infrastructure needs.

I want to thank Robbie Cornett, the Service Authority's General Manager, and the other excellent staff members of the Authority for their efforts on behalf of this project.

Dulcie Mumpower, Chair of the Washington County Board of Supervisors, and the other members of the Board deserve our thanks today for their continued efforts on behalf of Washington county residents.

Finally, I would like to thank Derek Lyall, my Project Manager, for his continued work in support of water projects throughout the Ninth Congressional District.

The construction which begins today represents a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to expand our region's water and wastewater infrastructure. I would like to thank everyone here for the cooperation and successful work toward the construction of the water treatment plant expansion and new water storage facility.